

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

September 13, 2007

Lame Deer Public Schools

The September 13, 2007 meeting of the Montana Board of Education was called to order by Governor Brian Schweitzer. Superintendent Dan Lantis welcomed the board to Lame Deer. President Eugene Little Coyote of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe welcomed the Board of Education, Governor Schweitzer and his office as their honored guests. He stated that the return to greatness for their tribe required a good education. They need to use education as a weapon to win against poverty and social problems on their reservation. They look to Governor Schweitzer for support and expertise in building a quality education program in Lame Deer.

Governor Schweitzer acknowledged President Little Coyote's comments and encouraged the Indian students in attendance to focus on their education, but to never forget their culture. The board broke into two groups to tour Chief Dull Knife College and the Lame Deer Schools.

ROLL CALL

Members present were: Regents Kerra Melvin, Lynn Morrison-Hamilton, Janine Pease, Lila Taylor, Clay Christian, Todd Buchanan and Board of Public Education members Cal Gilbert, Patty Myers, Storrs Bishop, Angela McLean, Sharon Carroll, Katie Wood and Kirk Miller. Ex-officio members present were Governor Schweitzer, Superintendent McCulloch and Commissioner Stearns.

Governor Schweitzer thanked Superintendent Lantis for the tour of the schools. The Governor introduced a Power Point presentation on Montana's economy. Montana has one of the fastest growing economies in the world and has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. Montana's wages are currently increasing faster than the average in the country. The growth in the economy is also spreading to eastern Montana. College funding from the state has been increased to \$8,500 per student. Education funding has also increased in the K-12 arena, partly due to funding full-time kindergarten. Research has shown the highest rate of return on education investment dollars is in the lower socio-economic areas.

Governor Schweitzer discussed the need to invest in science and math so the United States can move toward less dependence on foreign energy sources.

MINUTES

Governor Schweitzer stated the minutes of the January 18, 2007 meeting were in the members' packets and called for a motion to approve the minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Governor Schweitzer called for a motion to amend the Bylaws as outlined by Superintendent McCulloch. Superintendent McCulloch discussed the current bylaws and proposed amendments.

Regent Hamilton stated she would move to amend based on Superintendent McCulloch's recommendations, but felt that all amendments should be made at once and the board needed to discuss amendments to Articles VII and IX. Regent Taylor seconded the motion.

Governor Schweitzer called for discussion. Regent Hamilton discussed the amendment regarding the dates of the Board of Education meetings. She felt July might be a better travel month than September.

With regard to Article VII - Regent Hamilton stated with the creation of the Kindergarten to College Work Group, the standing committees were effectively moot. The board had the option of eliminating Article VII or changing it to some other language such as "task forces".

With regard to Article IX Regent Hamilton stated in discussing the issue with Jan Lombardi, she recommended the order of business be:

Roll call
Approve Minutes
Old Business Update
New Business
Adjournment

There was further discussion regarding the date of the meetings. Regent Hamilton withdrew her suggestion for the date change from September to July.

The motion by Regent Hamilton is to accept the changes to the bylaws proposed by Superintendent McCulloch, either eliminate Article VII or amend it and change it to read task forces, and to amend Article IX to provide the order of business will be as suggested by Jan Lombardi. Angela McLean seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

There was further discussion regarding the confusion about the amendment to Article VII. Regent Hamilton moved to eliminate Article VII, Regent Christian seconded. Discussion followed. Governor Schweitzer stated that eliminating Article VII would not prohibit the board from establishing ad hoc task forces as necessary. The Governor called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Regent Pease reported regarding the Kindergarten to College Workgroup. Members of the workgroup met to look at the strategic plans of all of the major educational authorities in Montana. The group looked at areas of common ground and those of divergence. The workgroup has put together a document which shows the strategic plans of the major educational agencies organized by content so parallel provisions can be seen together. This shows the similar topics the offices are addressing.

Erin Williams, chair of the workgroup, was unable to attend but sent a letter to the Board. The letter contains an overview of the results of their July meeting. At the July meeting the group reviewed the side by side strategic plan document and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) report. This document was the basis of their discussion in July regarding the transition

from high school to college and careers. It organizes a comprehensive set of information. Erin's letter lists the priorities developed by the workgroup. They are items of highest interest to the agencies as well as the workgroup.

1. To implement a single system for educational data that links systems from kindergarten through higher education.
2. To require essential core courses for all high school students.
3. To adopt an overarching dual enrollment policy statewide.
4. To set reasonable but ambitious annual targets toward meeting the 100% high school graduation goal and provide incentives for meeting them.

The SREB report provided questions for discussion and strategies to address the issues that came about. The participants in the workgroup looked at the strategies recommended and voted to place their highest priorities. They found there were shared priorities on strategies. Regent Pease submitted a document representing a highlighted version of the SREB report. It shows the areas of greatest need, areas of good news and areas where we are in the middle or lower part. This document is to give the board a sense of where students are.

Regent Pease presented the four items of highest priorities from the Kindergarten to College workgroup for the board's approval as an acceptance of the report of the Kindergarten to College workgroup. She stated that she was presenting these four items as the official report from the Kindergarten to College workgroup and it is critical for the board to accept the report in multiple parts with the lead document being the letter from Chair, Erin Williams.

Governor Schweitzer called for a motion to accept the recommendations. Regent Buchanan moved to accept the recommendations and Regent Christian seconded the motion. The Governor called for discussion.

Superintendent McCulloch commented that she was not at the July workgroup meeting when the SREB report was discussed. As background she related the report had little input from her or anyone at the Office of Public Instruction and there was very little K-12 input into the report. She cautioned the board not to focus their decision on a single document. She called the board's attention to an error on the second page of the "green" document where it was stated Indian Education for All was enacted to close the achievement gap between majority and American Indian populations. She stated that Indian Education for All is not about closing the achievement gap but is solely about cultural efforts and contemporary issues. She stated there were several inaccuracies she noted after a quick review and cautioned against giving blanket support over issues her office and the K-12 community had little input into.

Kirk Miller noted there were some areas with higher point totals which were not on the workgroup's priority list. Regent Pease stated the workgroup did not want to include areas the educational agencies weren't already working on.

Kirk Miller asked for clarification as to whether the motion was to accept the report.

Governor Schweitzer replied that they would discuss that further.

Regent Hamilton stated she was surprised the report didn't require multi-agency participation to increase graduation rates. Improving high school graduation rates is in the Board of Regents' strategic plan.

Jan Lombardi stated it was a K-12 responsibility for graduation of high school students and a higher education responsibility for graduation from college.

Steve Meloy commented although there were only 9 voting members, everyone voted including the ex-officio members.

Regent Pease stated only the ex officio members and voting members were issued the dots used for voting.

Governor Schweitzer commented he agreed with Superintendent McCulloch that Indian Education for All had nothing to do with closing the achievement gap and this needed to be fixed. Although they have a relationship to each other they are not the same issue.

Governor Schweitzer referred to Item #1 of the priorities regarding establishing a single system for educational data from kindergarten through college, with OCHE taking the lead on that issue. He asked the board if anyone had any comments or discussion on that issue. There were no comments.

The Governor referred to Item #2 which requires essential core courses for all high school students with OPI taking the lead and asked for comments. Superintendent McCulloch commented that increasing core courses at some or all of the high schools would require policy changes by the Board of Public Education and would cost a significant amount of money to implement in schools.

Dr. Stearns stated she has been describing this issue as an effort to align the standards for graduation from high school with the entrance requirements for colleges and universities. She wanted to ensure the work that OPI and BPE were doing on high school redesign links up with college entrance requirements.

Regent Christian commented he feels there is a disconnect between what students and parents view as the core and what college requirements are. It's not just meeting the requirements but whether the students are prepared to enter college that's the difference. Kirk Miller commented there is a group which gets together and reviews the core subjects. They review recommendations from national committees and determine what will fit for Montana. An example is a recommendation for one hour of physical education per day for all high school students. The board looked at the situation in Montana and determined the schools would have to double their physical education facilities in order to have space to add this requirement to the curriculum. The Board of Public Education looks carefully at all proposals to make sure the core becomes

not only what is best for kids but also that there is the financial ability to provide and sustain the programs.

Regent Pease stated the Kindergarten to College workgroup had an 18 month time frame to work on these issues. They have set this proposal forward as a statement to the board for approval. These are the agenda items the workgroup intends to work on. The workgroup's charge is to work collaboratively amongst the education agencies on these areas. The items proposed are what they are looking at and if the board approves, the workgroup will assemble a committee to work on these items together with the leadership that has voluntarily stepped forward.

Governor Schweitzer moved on to Item # 3 regarding adopting an overarching dual enrollment policy statewide with the Board of Public Education taking the lead.

Patty Myers said they have a task force in place and are working on it.

Governor Schweitzer commented there are a lot of supporting documents but basically what we're talking about is the four principals. Item #4 is to set reasonable but ambitious annual targets toward meeting the 100% high school graduation goal and provide incentives for meeting them. There was no discussion on this issue.

Governor Schweitzer stated that the motion is to accept just the four principals. Governor Schweitzer stated it's clear there is a collaborative effort occurring in each of these cases. The supporting documents are workgroup information. There was no further discussion

Governor Schweitzer stated the motion is to accept the four items as a continuing collaborative work effort. The motion carried unanimously.

Governor Schweitzer continued with a Board of Education discussion about workforce, economic development and its influence on education and education's influence on economic development. In his discussions with companies around the nation, they have said they will come here if we can provide a trained workforce. They want to know who we have to fill the positions their companies need.

The challenge is that Montana has 2% unemployment. We need to get the people these new companies need by retraining adults in higher education systems. This needs to be a collaborative effort between higher education and these companies. Another place we need to fill these jobs from is Indian country. On the reservations there is a 50% unemployment rate. The challenge is to train folks from Indian country to fill these jobs. There are colleges on each of the Indian reservations. The Indian population represents an under utilized work force in Montana. We can also bring our Montana kids home from states they went to to find good jobs. We need to find a system to retrain adults for the positions these companies have available.

Kirk Miller commented that K-12 education has a serious role in bringing companies and families to Montana because they want a high quality K-12 education for their children.

Regent Pease commented she had participated in a listening conference with the Board of Regents. There is major economic development going on in Glendive and Miles City. Montana needs a work force to be there for that development. She also encouraged the need to have dialogue in our schools about the opportunities in Montana.

Governor Schweitzer commented on his recent trip to California and meeting with the corporate executives at Apple. Apple has developed the PC, iPod and the iPhone. Governor Schweitzer asked them what was next. Apple's next big venture is individual education world wide. It will be podcasted information to individual students at individual rates worldwide. Teachers will be competing worldwide to answer questions from students about a specific concept. This will promote individualized learning at their own pace. This may provide great opportunities for Montana's rural communities. We need to be able to feed the ambitions and creativity of each child at his or her own pace. Apple has plans for this to begin with pre school children. Teachers can use the podcasts to take the place of textbooks.

Governor Schweitzer called for public comment.

Jacqueline Hurdle commented she felt her rights were violated when her child was sent to a detention center and she wasn't notified. She is very concerned that her people's rights are being violated.

Governor Schweitzer responded that Jan Lombardi would look into this situation and get further information.

Larry Blacksmith commented he agreed education is the key to providing full economic growth . He serves on the Montana Advisory Council for Indian Education (MACIE) and advised the board they have resolutions which will be presented to the Board of Public Education. Governor Schweitzer thanked Mr. Blacksmith for his comments.

Regent Pease moved that the meeting be adjourned and Angela McLean seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Dan Sioux identified himself as a Cheyenne Indian and asked if it was possible to create a law to elect qualified school board members. He stated he would like to see some standards set for school board members so they represented the best interests of education. He said often there were angry parents serving on the board. He encouraged the community to create a positive atmosphere for people to work together and communicate with each other.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Linda McCulloch

Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent
Secretary to the Montana State Board of Education